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Question for the Record Submitted to
Secretary of State Colin Powell by
Representative Nita Lowey (#42)
House Appropriations Foreign Operations Subcommittee
February 13, 2002

COLOMBIA: PIPELINE SECURITY

Question:

The Administration has requested \$100 million in FMF funding for pipeline security in Colombia-in addition to \$731 million requested to continue the Andean Initiative. The pipeline security project will involve the provision of training and equipment to a special Colombian army unit and would be the first time military assistance funds have been provided for other than anti-narcotics proposed in the Andean region.

- (i) Can you explain why the pipeline security program does not constitute "mission creep" or "nation building" in Colombia? Have rules of engagement been developed for U.S. troops?
- (ii) It is my understanding that this proposal was developed after meetings in Colombia with U.S. officials, the Colombian government and representatives of Occidental Petroleum. Can you provide us with any details of those meetings? What role did officials of Occidental Petroleum play in the meetings? Do you know how much Occidental and the Colombian government spend on security for this pipeline?
- (iii) Is this proposal a precursor for oil pipeline security programs elsewhere in the world (other potential pipelines could include those in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Indonesia, for example?)
- (iv) How will an escalation of U.S. military involvement improved prospects for peace with the FARC and the ELN?
- (v) Why are there no initiatives to assist the Colombian military or police in combating paramilitary groups?

Answer:

- (i) The infrastructure protection proposal involves a

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\$98 million request to train and equip Colombian units protecting the Cano Limon-Covenas pipeline. It is consistent with overall U.S. policy which is designed to help Colombia combat narcotrafficking, promote socio-economic development, strengthen democratic institutions and protect human rights. The proposal will help the Colombian government defend an important economic asset that is threatened by terrorist attacks committed by the Army of National Liberation (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). During 2001 there were over 160 attacks on this pipeline and resultant shutdowns cost Colombia more than \$430 million in lost revenue.

U.S. military personnel would provide training and other assistance to units of the Colombian 18th Brigade, the 5th Mobile Brigade, Colombian Marine units and the Colombian National Police. Training will be conducted only on approved bases (Arauca and Saravena so far and at other bases only after careful review). Trainers will not be permitted to accompany units on military operations.

(ii) U.S. and Colombian officials jointly developed this proposal in a series of meetings, the most important of which was in November 2001. Embassy officials also

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consulted with Occidental Petroleum and Ecopetrol.

Oil production by Occidental and Ecopetrol, a wholly owned entity of the Colombian Government, is conducted by the Cravo Norte Association (CNA), a for-profit joint venture of the two companies. CNA collects revenues generated by the Cano Limon oil field as well as paying for production and operating expenses, including royalties due the national, municipal and local governments, social investments in the region and assistance to the Colombian military. In addition to royalty payments which are used for regional and local social investment, development and investment programs, CNA has also provided approximately \$40 million for social investments in Arauca Department from 1986 to 2001 and it expects to spend another \$20 million over the next five years. CNA also provided approximately \$50 million in financial or in-kind assistance to the Colombian military since 1986, of which Occidental Petroleum provided \$8.6 million in 2001. These contributions have markedly increased since 1997 in the wake of the growing number of attacks on the pipeline that culminated in its being shut down for over 240 days in 2001, with losses to Colombia of more than \$430 million. All assistance by CNA is non-lethal, such as housing, food,

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land and air transportation, communications equipment, demining equipment, medical assistance and assistance to the relatives of wounded or killed soldiers.

(iii) This proposal is not intended to be a precursor to oil pipeline security programs anywhere else in the world. It was developed to respond to Colombia-specific problems.

(iv) The United States has provided Colombia with \$1.7 billion in assistance since 2000, with the goal of helping Colombia fight narcotics trafficking and terrorism, to strengthen government institutions and human rights protection, and to promote social and economic development. We have requested \$570 million in the FY03 budget to sustain these programs, which also includes the new proposal for \$98 million to enhance the Colombian government's capacity to defend a key oil pipeline from terrorist attacks. Just as the U.S. supported President Pastrana's management of the peace process with the FARC, we support his recent determination to end that process after the FARC hijacked a civilian aircraft and kidnapped a leading Senator traveling on the plane. Pastrana's decision came in the face of the FARC's continued failure to negotiate in good faith and after the group launched a

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terrorist offensive subsequent to Pastrana having renewed the then-demilitarized zone on January 20. Despite the end of the talks with the FARC, there is renewed hope that efforts by the Government of Colombia with the ELN will result in a cease-fire. U.S. support for Colombia is intended to improve the prospects for peace in Colombia. The failed peace process with the FARC underlines the point that it will only negotiate seriously if motivated to desist from lucrative narcotics, kidnapping and extortion activities, which themselves flourish because of the weakness of Colombia's security services and government institutions.

(v) The United States, as noted above, supports a wide range of programs designed to help Colombia fight narcotics trafficking and terrorism, to strengthen the rule of law, democracy and human rights protection, provide humanitarian aid and to promote social and economic development. While there is no initiative specifically aimed at assisting the Colombian armed forces or police to combat paramilitary groups, these programs contribute to the government's ability to confront the paramilitaries. Additionally, the U.S. designated the AUC as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under U.S. law and senior U.S. officials regularly

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stress to their GOC counterparts the need to actively combat the AUC. President Pastrana and senior military commanders recognize the AUC's threat to Colombian democracy and, in fact, during 2001 the Colombian armed forces and police killed 116 members of the AUC in combat and arrested 992, three times the numbers that were killed or detained during 2000.

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